



“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

Ben Emata Jr.

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The Striker

By: Ben Emata

It is only in the Philippines that people who are in jail awaiting for final sentencing or facing capital offense cases, still have the nerves to file certificates of candidacy for an elective post.

It is so funny our laws allow them to run for the senate or whatever even if their cases are not bailable because they carry capital punishment, and that there is sufficient evidence to prove their guilt. Of course, under the law, a person is innocent until proven otherwise. And worst of all, some of these suspects in jail who are wealthy can easily get elected. The particular law seems outdated and is sweeping. It blindly applies to anyone in jail regardless of the gravity of his or her cases. If I may suggest the cases should be examined closely and a judge determines first and recommends, if the cases involved are weak or strong enough against the suspects who intend to run for public office. A recommendation from the presiding judge should be a requirement for an accused to run for public office. Better still - - modify or discard this law for good.

We must know that public office is public trust. And putting there to rule, a man who is a habitual offender but could not be finally convicted because of legal maneuvers, dilatory tactics and wealth in settling cases, is something highly immoral.

I have yet to hear from the USA, Japan, China, Korea, England, France or anywhere that things like these are happening. In these countries, the moment a politician is suspected to have committed something big, he feels he lost not only his face but also his honor and dignity. Some of them prepare to commit suicide or live in seclusion and darkness to avoid society forever.

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Former Pres. Erap Estrada is a very lucky man. He is facing plunder cases that carry capital punishment and yet he is enjoying the life of a free man - - living with pleasure in his own favorite home.

He can still have as much wine as he pleases and money at his disposal. He can visit anyone he likes and travel abroad if he so wishes. And yet the prosecutors are saying his cases are so strong and he is assured of a free ticket to conviction.

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While online voting for Filipinos in Singapore in Philippines elections is fast and sure, I am doubtful about high tech flying voters who can easily have access online and cast their votes as many times as possible. This is much different in the absentee voting where the electorates cast their votes on ballots provided to them.

The Internet has many mysterious things that many people still cannot comprehend fully well. Anybody can be somebody and things abstracts can be human beings. It is easy to fabricate names and addresses and much easier even to produce as many copies in just a wink of an eye.

Programmers, designers, hackers and software engineers can easily create a program to manipulate the result of the elections online by way of the flying voting scheme. I still hope, though that no fraud will be designed for the purpose.

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The media has also its share in corruption. While many honest media practitioners are trying hard to maintain the integrity and credibility of the profession, many pseudo-journalists who knew so little about ethics in journalism, are out monkeying in the open and do malpractices. Many of them perhaps think the media is the shortest way to earn a lot of money and still remain prestigious. They engage in massive innuendoes and fabricate stories to destroy the good names of people and blackmail government officials and politicians. Almost always the latter meet them somewhere with cash thus proliferating the dirty practices and corruption in the media.



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More and more members of the media are allegedly in government payrolls or getting paychecks from political headquarters. Others are clandestinely hired as “doggie-doggies” or advisers and even as security guards or secret agents.

I am calling for all straightforward media practitioners not to allow this matter to prosper. It is that sacred right to practice journalism that is jeopardized severely and we are directly the victims. The venoms fired by these idiots, will go a long way and find its marks right on our faces. The dignity of journalism is in peril and all media practitioners appear as animated cartoons to the eyes of the public.

I would even suggest that legislation should be passed in congress making corruption in the media a criminal offense and wrongdoers should be hanged in public like Sadam. Or make the practice of journalism a highly professional endeavor thereby requiring each practitioner covered by the Professional Regulations Board. In other words, nobody can get into the media unless he or she passes the professional board examinations. By this we encourage appropriate education before actual practice.

When I was in the country in year 2005, a regional director confessed to me how ugly and dirty many media men now compared to the yesteryears. He said, “it is terrible and truly deplorable such kind of people who are supposed to be model in the community would make abuses. He said it was all about threat and money.

When the 17 town mayors of Misamis Oriental came to San Francisco, California, on important business not long ago, at least four of them told me how half-baked journalists, some of them without outlets, openly demand money. These bastards talk with threats and surely scare the politicians.

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The climbers of the towering Mt. Everest include two young ladies who are very determined to reach the peak this year. A team of good and experienced climbers is now ready after numerous practices these past months. These Filipinos are very ambitious and determined to establish a record.



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What they need is cash to meet necessary expenses like food, communication, transportations, medicines, etc. We the Filipinos in California tried to raise whatever amount to help the team.

What I really cannot understand is the lukewarm attitude of Pres. Gloria Arroyo to help the team. She can easily give ten million pesos to push through with the plan to conquer once more the majestic mountain, this time with Filipino women.

When Pastor Emata and Oracion and the entire team visited the President in Malacanang after that great triumph, they were offered nothing but cakes. When the champion of a billiard game who won five million pesos visited the president, he was given one million pesos more. This is just weird. And the president has over-killed the honor she showered to Manny Pacquiao when the latter showed up in the Palace. The country has produced so many world-boxing champions even before the time of Flash Elorde and this looks ordinary now. But conquering the deadly Mt. Everest by two Filipinos was the first ever since the landing of Magellan in our shores. It has brought great honors to the country that has been wrapped severely by news stories of massive corruption, criminalities and dishonors. It has refurbished in a way the ugly publicity fed to the international audience in years. To award them, therefore, of a slice of cake is shortsightedness and pure and simple miscalculation.

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I cannot figure out what the Philippine Senate will look like in the coming years with lots of movie stars and celebrities as senators. Certainly, there will be lots of nice-looking gentlemen and ladies just sitting around debating anything nonsense that are good for the movie industry. Maybe someone will put up a beauty saloon nearby putting aside the discussion of world affairs, legislative functions and other important matters like terrorism and global warming.

Of course, there is nothing wrong in having good-looking people as senators except that some of them have little in education and, therefore, not capable of getting into discussions of high issues that involved a Republic. Until now there is no provision that bars less educated people to become senators and congressmen. This is a free-



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for-all ventures that anyone who can read and write are qualified to pass delicate laws that concern the future of the Filipinos. And how can we expect quality bills coming from sub-standard legislators?

I can just recall some of the able gentlemen and ladies in the Senate of yesteryears with such high caliber people as Claro Recto, Lorenzo Tanada, Emmanuel Pelaez, Domocao Alonto, Fernando Lopez, Ferdinand Marcos, Tecla San Andress-Zega, Geronima Pecson, Eulogio Rodriguez, Vicente Sotto, Camilo Cabili, Diosdado Macapagal, Quintin Paredes, Sergio Omena, Jr., Mariano Cuenco, Roseller Lim, Eleuterio Adevoso, Salipada Pendatun, Camilo Osias, Diosdado Macapagal, Tolentino brothers, Decoroso Rosales, Jose Laurel, Jr., Doy Laurel, Letecia Shajani, Jose Avelino, Gil Puyat, Pacita Madrigal-Warns, Rene Espina, Roilo Golez, etc.

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It has been a long time that Cagayan de Oro City residents as well as a lot of people in other provinces were lost and utterly deprived of its pleasure and enjoyment of the use of beaches especially during Sundays.

We used to have super beautiful beaches where people freely get in and out to swim, to stroll/jog around, and to do other physical exercises. The beaches are a natural gift from nature supposedly open to everyone for free but sad to state it has become a wild dreams to many. The reason is many enterprising individuals found this only sanctuary of pleasure of most people as very feasible in business. It appears a few wealthy entrepreneurs who construct fences and cottages and cater them to picnickers had subdivided the beaches. The average beach goes with large families who could hardly pay the exorbitant cost are left outside with heavy hearts.

When I visited our city last year, I rushed to the beaches nearby to enjoy what I thought was the old cold sea breeze but found myself lost in the wilderness of nipa cottages and picnickers with their full volume stereo sounds. It was a mess. I could not get in for nothing like what I used to do many years ago. I walked far from east to west hoping to reach the perimeter of the open beach, free of charge, and away from



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the irritating noise of the maddening crowd or from the outside world but I ended tired and just went home very disappointed.

I left the place without seeing the beautiful seashore that I used to enjoy, without hearing the whispers of the waves as they race towards the land and less a glimpse of the clear water from yesterday's blue sea.

I felt so deprived of the use of a public property that truly belongs to the general public but now are in the hands of greedy entrepreneurs who constructed barbwire. I was robbed of my right to take a swim in the cold, white crystal sea, and the right to breath the fresh air from the unperturbed serenity of the once great beaches of Misamis Oriental.

Filipinos living in the USA could not just go to the beach to take a bath like what they did in the Philippines because the water is unbearably cool. I have been in this great country for more than seventeen years and I never had gone to the beach to swim. This is the reason why I missed so much the beaches. Of course, I can afford to pay the entrance and parking fees but what I need was my long lost right to enjoy the shoreline for free. (BEN EMATA)